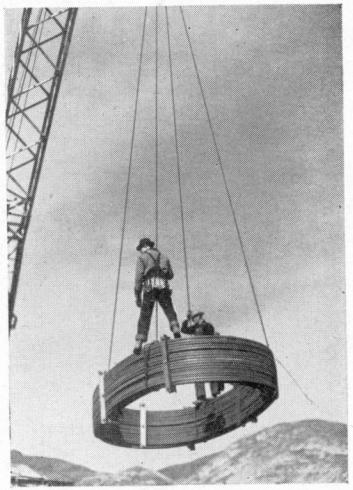
Forty-Eight States Contribute Wide Variety of Supplies

IN THE first seven-year period of construction on the Columbic Basin project, nearly $40,000,000 was spent in payment of payrolls. Over $61,000,000 went toward construction equipment, materials, and supplies of a general nature. These purchases were made directly in 40 states of the Union, and, likewise, other states benefited, too, in the vast spending program necessary for getting the gigantic project under way.

Trainloads of materials from tacks to the most ingenious contrivances yet developed to meet man's need, not to mention the heaviest-powered machinery ever to be put into operation, passed westward in a never-ending procession to keep pace with the work going on in central Washington. Each day brought new demands upon industry to provide the essentials to meet the fast-developing job of harnessing the Columbia to the will of man. Seemingly without end, new and never-before-tried machinery found its way to the dam, there to take its place in the world of innovations and practical research. This procedure of demand did not alter when the M-W-A-K Company concluded its contract and the work was turned over to the Consolidated Builders, Incorporated, in January, 1938. The latter company was given the contract to complete the dam and continued to that end.



Immediately work was undertaken at the site of the dam, where only three families lived prior to the time excavations were begun in 1933, housing facilities had to be established for the influx of workers. Two towns were the answer to the situation.

One, Coulee Dam, was built on the west side of the Columbia by the Bureau of Reclamation. The second was established across the river, and it took the name of Mason City from the contractor. Upon completion of the dam, Mason City became known as Coulee Dam.

Permanent Town Modern

Coulee Dam is a permanent town to accommodate government employes on the Columbia Basin project. Paved streets, concrete sidewalks, an excellent water system, street lighting, sewage, and other modern necessities go to make up the attractive settlement. Two large dormitories and 77 residences first were constructed in the town. An administration building, school, fire station, post office, garage, and shops soon were added. Attractive landscaping has lent a permanent atmosphere to the well-laid-out town.

Electricity in both towns is used almost exclusively for cooking, and, of course, for lighting.